

The Persian Push

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Post Date: October 15, 2001

The Persian Push strategy has stood the test of time. It was first published during the summer of 1999 and many contend that this strategy single handily changed the bidding and strategy mostly played in Spring 1942. Over two years later now the Persian Push is still talked about, utilized and a major force in Allied play. Played properly and with patience this strategy is a surefire means to force any axis player into an early tek mode and can vault any new player into an immediate respectable winning percentage. I've used and perfected this strategy myself over years of play including 4 clubs (IAAPA, AAMC, BOP and Spring 1942) and over 780 online games. During this time I held the #1 ranking position in each of these 4 clubs (Spring GOA numerous times) and this success is largely attributable to this strategy.

The key's to this strategy are Timing (Tempo); Efficiency; Positional Play and Deception.

#1 Timing (Tempo): You must maneuver Japan and/or Germany so that when you strike with the push you can't be counter attacked on both ends. This timing takes some practice and vision. You'll plan your strike about 2-3 turns in advance and then use those turns to set up favorable movement lanes, retreat conditions and strike zones (Example would be making sure you can land your air in a safe location and/or that you can hit and retreat into a secure zone). Remember the key strike zones on the board are A) Novosibirsk (Yakut); B) Middle East (Persia) and C) Eastern Europe (Ukraine). It's important to time your purchases and attrition combat moves well -- Example: If you know you're going to need extra IPC's with the USA for additional air support then be sure to take trading territories with America in advance. Secondly, be sure to time your purchases -- Example: When you're going to make a push into Persia be sure you have ample armor purchased and/or stationed in Karelia. You will get a better idea of the timing areas necessary as I spell out the specific moves below. When you purchase and/or deploy units, you do so with a specific intent in mind. These units are either defending a specific territory (Karelia), protecting a secondary territory from being taken in force and massing for the execution of your overall strategy. Your tempo is the smooth transgression from your purchase to the units ultimate desired location/purpose.

Loss of tempo is when your opponent is able to force you (or bait you) into using those units for purposes not originally designed. (Example -- Taking France in force unplanned or having to liberate Alaska). It is critical that you ensure that you don't lose tempo in the 2 turns preceding the final execution of the Persian Push.

#2 Efficiency: It is critical to protect certain strike zones; certain units and certain nationalities. The basic premise of this strategy is to use UK as a board maintenance vehicle. Example -- UK should be the main force retaking Africa; trading Ukraine, trading Persia and help along the eastern Russian front. Note, use UK to take France if they need IPCs to fulfill their responsibilities. You always want your units to have a dual capacity. Example, your units will pressure one or two strike zones while defending/holding a territory and massing in defense (for offense). This strategy gets the most value out of your units as possible. UK armor held in Karelia pressure

EE, Persia and Novosibirsk while they defend Karelia and all along while they are simply massing in preparation to move in force into Persia. This gives them the capability of acting as an offensive force while serving as defense. The above timing issue comes into play here as you need to maneuver whatever they are defending from before you can then use those defense units in a strike. (Example, you need to factor into the Karelia defense that you are likely to move about 15 units out when you execute the push. Therefore, be sure you "time" your moves so that you have ample UK/US ground forces coming behind to defend Karelia along with making sure you have landed all available US/Russia fighters to defend Karelia. Additionally, make sure your purchases and movements make sense. Don't have 9 transports and only use 4; moreover, don't have 4 transports and mass units in your capital.

The strength of the allies is that all 3 can work in concert -- the better you have this timed and the more efficient you are at this choreographed effort the better your success rate.

#3 Positional Play: This is the strategy by which the Allied player controls the board with short regard for IPCs or the plus/minus value of an attack. Your ability to time these moves and know when to take them will ultimately determine how far up the ranks you move. A few examples are: A) While its a cardinal sin to attack ground units with air only units, you should go after 1 or 2 (even 3 depending on how much air you can attack with) land units when they stand alone able to take/hold Africa. Even the loss of a few fighters is worth holding or taking Africa; B) You get Germany into a position where she needs everything possible to hang onto EE. The move then is to take France with a full UK and USA load of ground units.

While Germany can easily retake France she won't be able to hold EE after not allocating any new units to defending EE, also any Germany armor left in France may be exposed to a counter attack; C) You force Japan to attack an under-defended force in Persia while you take advantage to move into Yakut. In each of these examples you force your opponent into attacks and/or you sacrifice units in order to control a desired position.

#4 Deception: You want to sell your opponent that you're going to do one thing while in fact you are setting up for something different. Most players can stop what they can openly see coming; however, if you disguise your intentions you can force them to react in a pressure moment. You want to control your opponent....he should be attacking you where and when you want him to attack. Don't fall for traps and instead set plenty of traps. A trap is leaving an area or territory under fortified inviting an opponent strike for the purpose of destroying certain units in a counter attack, or moving certain units out of position or of diverting your opponents attention and resources at a key moment. Some basic beginning trap areas are -- 1) German bomber hitting 3-4 transports in EUS sz; 2) Russia hitting Manchuria on R1 and 3) Germany counterattacking Ukraine on G1. While each of these seems like good aggressive moves they are filled with problems. 1) The German bomber is annoying and very useful for Axis...once destroyed they simply can't produce another. You would gladly trade 2 or even 3 transports to get that bomber off the board. The USA can produce transports like a baby shark cuts new teeth; however, Germany's bomber is one and done. 2) Russia needs to maintain Yakut early in the game for many reasons (see below); once they strike Manchuria it's an easy counter for Japan and then Russia is left wide open in Asia. 3) I absolutely love when my opponent counter attacks Ukraine. There is one key -- You need to take Ukraine with 4/3 (3/3 is borderline). If you see you're going to take with less than 4/3 (or 3/3) execute a power retreat back to Karelia. However, taking with 4/3 sets up a beautiful trap. Germany wants so badly to take out the Russian armor; however, to

do so it gives up it's own armor and critical board position (strength) and possibly other key G1 targets. If Germany tries to "do it all" on G1, they will likely fail at one or more areas or leave key counter attack units intact...if Germany draws her focus on Ukraine she leaves important naval pieces untouched. No matter which way she decides to go it's a positive situation for the Allies. Once my opponent runs his attacks and leaves Ukraine alone, I know I'm in for a tough game.

Responsibilities:

USSR -- Needs to produce 18-21 IPC/turn. Early in the game it's job is to maintain board balance, good position and control IPCs on land while the Allies get in position. After UK and USA get into position Russia's job is to provide defense and support. Defense against Eastern Europe and support to the Persian Push strategy. Key's: Maintaining 2 fighters and approximately 10-12 armor. Additionally, not to fall into poor attack positions -- Example Sinkiang or the Japanese coast.

UK -- Needs to produce 20-24 IPC/turn. Their job is to serve as fodder for board maintenance allowing their Allies to mass for larger more wide-sweeping attacks. Additionally, their job is to retake Africa from Germany. This is key....notice I didn't say retake Africa from Japan. Here is a surprise for many players....It is not that important for the Allies to take Africa from the Atlantic. The key is for them to take and control West Africa (4 IPC) and put pressure on or trade Egypt and Congo (3 IPC). As the game goes on that is all the Allies need out of Africa. However, when the remaining territories are in Axis hands they must be in Japan's hands not Germany. The allies can't afford to give Germany that cash. So just be sure Africa isn't gray and you're in pretty good shape. Key's: Ability to move in the Atlantic (meaning you either need 2 capital ships (1 US) OR a depleted opposing AF); 1 bomber; at least 2 ftrs (but, 3 is really nice) and 4 shuttles per turn. England should build a 5th transport once they control Africa and are trading India. This puts additional pressure on France/Germany.

USA -- Needs to produce 33-34 IPC/turn. Their job is to force the action in the strike zones. USA mounts armor in Russia to pressure Yakut, Sinkiang and Eastern Europe. They will then serve as the main striking force either in the East or the West. Key: Own Finland! It is possible to run the strategy w/o the IC in Finland, however, you must be near perfect with your timing and efficiency. The IC in Finland allows you produce whatever units you require at the point of attack. Don't downplay the ability to build a transport or even a carrier in either the North Sea or Baltic sz. This ability has saved me many games.

Okay, we've discussed much of the set up, general philosophies and basic responsibilities and some goals heading into the game. Lets discuss some final game philosophies and then move on to the execution part of the Persian Push with a Swinging Gate.

#1 If you take Finland with USSR or UK it should be a mistake. Deal with the mistake by producing 2 extra transports, but, realize this is a problem for the strategy. You should soften Finland with UK or USSR because you want USA to get it as soon as possible.

#2 Force Japan to defend the coast with a capital ship. Early in the game you should have a Brit AF in Yakut and later in the game you should have bombers stationed in Novosibirsk. Most games you will take out 1 of the Japanese capital

ships on a counter to Hawaii. If this is the case you should look for opportunities to take out a 2nd Japanese capital ship in the Red Sea with preferably the US airforce, or the UK airforce if necessary (or a combination of both).

#3 Deal with the Brazil attack early by sending units into Mexico/Panama on your terms. Do this even if you suspect your opponent isn't headed to Brazil. It's a pain in the butt to go get this later. Remember you want to do things when you want to do them....not under your opponents time table. Just 1 infantry in Panama makes liberating Brazil so much easier when an armor comes from WUS in temp to meet up in Brazil. (2 turns -- 1) Pan inf to Ven, arm to Pan; bmb to range; 2) Ven inf + Pan arm attack + bmb Brazil)

#4 Attack Africa from both sides. Pressure Iraq and Egypt from Persia and maintain the West African block from the Atlantic. Clear Germany off Africa at all costs, however, don't get preoccupied with doing the same for Japan.

#5 Kill the German navy as soon as possible and at all costs.

#6 Don't fall for the trap to take France -- except to trade or unless your opponent can't retake w/o exposing armor or giving up EE.

#7 Don't attack Sinkiang unless you need to cut off a counter attack.

#8 Don't attack the Asian coast with Russia unless Japan is out of range or unless Japan is very depleted with units.

#9 Don't panic if Japan brings a navy over to the Atlantic. Keep running your game until they get there...then take them out. It's likely that their plans revolve around that strategy and once Japan dies in the Atlantic the Axis plan is without center.

Remember you can build and live in the Atlantic while it takes Japan forever to get there. Once you reduce them they can't rebuild -- you can. Subs and bombers work best. The worst thing you can do is stop your flow to pre plan for this event. Just invite them in...then kill them.

#10 The Allies won the war because they worked together and the Axis were two separate armies doing their own thing. Use this to your advantage. Double and triple strikes are very effective. Use some American armor to open attack lanes for Russia to gain key position or capture key units. Remember 3 Allies get to turn before either one Axis power has a second turn. American armor are an excellent open when you are making your final penetration into Yakut/Sinkiang and Persia for the push.

#11 Use the retreat key. Power retreats win games -- simple. You don't always want to capture a territory, you just want to use your might to trade a few infantry for you compared to many units for your opponent. Then leave him keep the territory with a few helpless units while you retreat to safety.

#12 Don't get caught up in battle costs. Effectiveness in a combat move can't always be gauged by total cost of units. I will gladly give up more IPC value to gain position or key units. Small example -- Would you trade a USA fighter for a German fighter? You should!

#13 Patience! This is one of the most critical aspects of playing the allies and

running the Persian Push. Most importantly is going for the kill. You must get a good feel when you rush for the kill shot and when to take your time. Unless you get a shot at an under-defended Germany it's almost always better to wait an extra 1 or 2 turns and take Germany hard instead of losing tons of units in the attack.

Once you have Germany pinned you should take her strong and under your terms while keeping a thumb on Japan. Don't rush in just to own the capital...you will get it, but, be patient.

Now without further adieu -- The Persian Push (with a Swinging Gate)

USSR 1 -- Clear Baltic; Attack sub in NE Atlantic and Attack Ukraine, OR Clean Baltic w/2 naval units plus 1 ftr and take full force plus 1 ftr into Ukraine.

If bid is PE at 5 units or less use your navy plus 1 ftr in Baltic and hit Ukraine anyway with 8/3/1. You most likely will have to PR out of this set. If bid is PE at 6 or more units you must take EE instead 3/3/1.

UK 1 -- If UK has a capital ship they purchase 3 transports most of the time (only exception would be if Germany has all 6 air plus no Russian navy left after G1).

Assuming you have a transport hit Finland. If Germany countered in Ukraine use the bombers range to set up a retreat to Karelia by flying over Ukraine. This is important so you can get your bomber and ftrs in position for round 2. Land the fighters in Caucasus and bomber in Russia. A smart bid placement prevents you from counter attack Egypt. The move I like best is to non combat Iraq to Persia; 1 inf from India to Sinkiang and transport to East or West Australia sea zone. This move forces Japan's hand and sets up for UK2 taking out the German navy. Japan usually wants to buy a few transports on J1. However, with 1 ftr and 1 bomber in striking distance she can't use all capital ships in Hawaii (this is the counter I referred to above). Additionally, the transport in EAUS sz offers many problems. 1) If I uses both inf in India UK can walk into Phil. 2) It forces the sub down to fight the transport and thus divert it from Haw sz which in turn sets up a better counter attack on Hawaii sz. 3) If Japan takes Hawaii light and USA counter attacks and survives a battleship UK can move to Hawaii with 1 inf. If you see this move coming your US 1 purchase should be 1 ftr, 1 bmb and 3 inf. Moving the transport to West Australia keeps the Jap sub out of range of a J2 counterattack on Hawaii sz should the US counter with her battleship.

USA 1 -- assuming UK softened Finland USA takes with 2 inf (bomber if necessary).

If UK didn't soften Finland USA should purchase 3 trn and 4 inf which sets up Finland to fall on US2. If Germany has bomber in France and Japan takes Hawaii hard the US best purchase is 1 bmb, 1 ftr, 3 inf.

USSR 2 -- If EE is traded Russia buys armor otherwise they purchase more infantry.

Russia moves 1 inf into Moscow and 2 inf into Caucasus. The rest of the turn sets up defense.

UK 2 -- UK purchases 4 armor. They move their navy + 4 inf, 2 arm into Algeria and they destroy the German navy. This move sets up UK 3 where these 6 units move to FEq while the next drop of 4 arm puts immediate pressure on Egypt. (4 inf, 6 arm + air + American's).

USA 2 -- US purchase an IC for Finland or takes Finland strong if she didn't capture her in USA 1.

At this point the board is set for the following build --

Russia puts up a wall in Karelia and slowly begins to put a few infantry in Moscow once it's clear Germany can't attack Karelia. They eventually pull back and double up on Novosibirsk with infantry. They want to hold their armor in Moscow putting pressure on both Yakut and Eastern Europe. (this is called the 'Holding the Hammer'. Russia has infantry in Novo and Karelia and armor in Russia and can strike either direction). Russia stays in this position (or regains if she temporarily must back up to Moscow while waiting for the Allied shuttle) until they either support an attack on Eastern Europe or fortify a move to Yakut during the "Push" phase of the move. Russia masses and holds Novosibirsk with approximately 15 infantry filtered as noted above.

UK sends a 2 full sets to Africa as noted above. After that they send full shuttles directly into Karelia. Sending 2-4 units into Caucasus and Russia while trading Ukraine and massing the remaining units. Remember that you can use minimum forces in these combats due to superior air and follow-up in case you clear but fail to take. This is a major Allied advantage. UK continues to add 8 units to Karelia each turn and splitting off 1 or 2 into Ukraine and 2-4 into Caucasus and 1-2 into Russia. Once your Caucasus mass builds to 15-18 make sure you have ample UK armor in Karelia ((6-10) or in clear range of Persia. You are now set to push Persia with 15-18 inf and 6-10 armor (21-28 units). Side notes, if Persia is held by 1 Jap inf, you should take with 2 American armor during the turn prior to running the push. This allows UK to land some air in Persia as well if needed. Also, along the buildup I often try to get a UK AA gun into Caucasus (suggestion...you can use the Russian transport if you have it and not lose tempo of UK units). This gun in Persia is very helpful since Japan's strength is often her massive air support. This AA gun will be most useful when you take India should Japan make the decision to fight off the USSR/USA troops up north.

USA builds 2 armor each turn in Finland and moves them to Russia (you may hold him in Karelia for a turn here and there if you need additional defense). They shuttle 8 inf from America to Finland and standing units in Finland to Karelia. For most of the game USA does very little fighting. You're looking to mass about 15-20 armor in Moscow. By the time it takes you to mass your armor you'll have about 35 or so infantry in Karelia. At this point Karelia is very safe between Russian and American Infantry. Build a 5th and 6th transport as the game progresses. This becomes critical when you execute the swinging game (discussed below) and it also puts much additional pressure on Germany and France. Remember, pressure on Germany and France means less pressure on Karelia which means more pressure and free movement in Asia vs Japan. It's a ripple effect.

At this point Germany is feeling the heat on Eastern Europe and has very little hope with Karelia. ****If**** Germany pulls into Berlin then use the following move. Take EE strong with UK; take Ukraine with 1 American infantry, 1 armor. Move all other American units into EE. Fortify with Russian Infantry (use some armor if necessary) and all air units. At this point the game should be history. Start the "Italian Dance" by moving to Italy and subsequently France. It's just a matter of time.

If Germany holds EE - which she will try to do 85-90% of the time because she knows that retreating now means eventual defeat. Execute the Persian Push. Begin the push with USA not UK -- America takes Yakut will all 15-20 armor (less 2 if

needed as noted above in Persia). Russia then fortifies with Infantry and about half their armor (5-6 armor units) plus one fighter. UK moves all units into Persia (21-28). You have successfully split Japan in half and she cannot counter attack either half and cannot continue to defend all of Asia. She will have to decide where to re-mass units to push you back; however, she has lost all her tempo and can't afford any meaningful tek. This buys the Allies a minimum of 2 turns and often 3-4 turns.

Precious time that clinches the outcome. If Japan hesitates on what to do and just draws back -- do not follow her even though the temptation will be great. You will be able to defeat here at each end, however you will then lose your greatest asset which is superior position and the ability to execute the swinging gate. The "Swinging Gate" is the execution phase of the Persian Push. Because your strength is the noted armor, you simply pin Japan into a position of trading both Sinkiang or Yakut and India and swing your armor back to crush Germany. Remember above when I spoke of good timing and sacrificing units. Once you swing your units back in range of EE you should take either France or Spain with a double load. Germany is now under siege and Japan is split and pinned back at her coast. At this point tek won't save the axis because Germany should fall several turns before Japan can even get a shot on Russia. Thus, the allied units can then reacquire board dominance and control the Japanese. Note: If Japan gets HBs or IT, don't panic. Once you hold Novosibirsk it's not critical that Russia collects an income. You most likely have enough on the board to finish the job. Because you hold this superior position, Japan cannot devote units to America and they can't reach UK unless they want to land in a very volatile Germany.

I feel the Persian Push is very hard to beat with even dice for a few reasons. #1 the Allies are superior in this game to begin with and this move doesn't rely on a strategy which can be stopped. It simply helps you gain dominance in the 3 strike zones. Once you control Novosibirsk; Persia and at least hold EE there is little the Axis can do to change momentum. The move is predicated on position which is critical to victory. It takes full advantage of the Axis shortcomings and stresses the 3-2 sided dominance of the Allies. #2 At any time you can use the Swinging Gate approach and with 1 turn refocus your assault on the other Axis power. You can make your opponent react to defend one side while you then attack the other. You simply switch from end to end scooping up IPCs and destroying Axis units. #3 You are never committed to going just at Japan or just at Germany; at a notice you can hit either and in some circumstances both.

Finally, this strategy avoids unit locks to a great extent. In over 600 CD games I've had 4 or 5 unit lock games. The Japan HB strategy is in jeopardy also because once and if they get HBs you can easily reduce their income to low 30s and force them to bomb only Russia. Other than very favorable Axis dice there is little they can do to stop this Allied assault.

GenPyle
Past General of the Army
Spring 1942